

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 037034

TODEP 4

FOLLOWING SENT SECSTATE WASHDC INFO AMMAN BEIRUT CAIRO GENEVA
JERUSALEM JIDDA LONDON FROM TEL AVIV 25 FEB 74:

QUOTE C O N F I D E N T I A L TEL AVIV 1082

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT IS

SUBJ: FORMATION OF NEW ISRAELI GOVERNMENT STATUS REPORT

REF: TEL AVIV 1063

LONDON FOR SECRETARY'S PARTY

1. ISRAELI POLITICANS AND COMMENTATORS WITH WHOM WE
HAVE BEEN IN CONTACT OVER WEEKEND AND THIS MORNING BELIEVE
THAT ONGOING CARETAKER ISRAELI GOVERNMENT THIS WEEK,
AND THEREAFTER A NEW MINORITY GOVERNMENT (IF FORMED),
WILL BE FULLY ABLE TO MAKE THE NECESSARY DECISIONS AND
THEN ENTER INTO AGREEMENT ON DISENGAGEMENT WITH SYRIA,
AS WAS CASE WITH EGYPT. OUR SOURCES ARE HOLDING TO
THIS VIEW DESPITE BURGEONING CRISIS WITHIN LABOR PARTY
AND CONTINUING DIFFICULTIES IN FORMATION OF NEW GOVERNMENT.
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BUT DECISION-MAKING PROCESS ON BROADER ARAB-ISRAELI

SETTLEMENT ISSUES THEREAFTER IS EXPECTED TO BE CONSIDERABLY MORE DIFFICULT.

2. LABOR PARTY CENTRAL COMMITTEE FEB 24 GAVE OVERWHELMING APPROVAL TO MRS MEIR'S DECISION TO FORM MINORITY GOVERNMENT. PARTY'S EXECUTIVE BUREAU AND KNESSET FACTION ARE SUPPOSED TO MEET IN JOINT SESSION EVENING FEB 26 IN JERUSALEM TO APPROVE MRS MEIR'S NOMINATIONS FOR NEW CABINET. AS REPORTED REFTEL, MRS MEIR WILL THEN PRESENT HER GOVERNMENT TO PRESIDENT KATZIR FEB 27 BUT, ACCORDING TO LATEST INFORMATION AVAILABLE TO US, WILL NOT GO TO KNESSET FOR VOTE OF CONFIDENCE UNTIL MARCH 4.

3. DAYAN AND PERES CONTINUE TO STICK BY THEIR DECISION NOT TO SERVE AS MINISTERS IN NEXT CABINET DESPITE INTENSE EFFORTS OVER WEEKEND TO GET THEM TO REVERSE THEIR DECISION. AT ABOVE-MENTIONED CENTRAL COMMITTEE SESSION, EMBOFF WAS PRESENT AND HEARD MRS MEIR DECLARE IN PERSONAL TERMS DIRECTLY TO DAYAN AND PEREX, "YOU DO NOT HAVE THE RIGHT TO LEAVE AT THIS TIME, WHEN I KNOW WE SHALL HAVE TO FACE CRITICAL AND FATEFUL DECISIONS." ADDRESSING HERSELF TO POSSIBILITY OF PERMANENT SPLIT IN LABOR PARTY ARISING OUT OF CURRENT CRISIS, MRS MEIR TOLD DAYAN, "YOU WILL NEVER BE ABLE TO FORGIVE YOURSELF LATER ON IF THIS OCCURS." MRS MEIR MADE CLEAR THAT IN HER JUDGMENT SHE WAS CONFRONTED BY TWO CHOICES ONLY: FORMING A MINORITY GOVERNMENT WITH THE SUPPORT OF ALL 54 LABOR ALIGNMENT MEMBERS OR GOING TO NEW ELECTIONS. SHE REPEATED HER FIRM REFUSAL TO CONSIDER A NATIONAL UNITY GOVERNMENT, SAYING THAT BRINGING LIKUD INTO GOVERNMENT WOULD BE A "DISASTER FOR THE STATE," AS IT WOULD BLOCK PROSPECTS FOR NEGOTIATIONS AND WOULD THREATEN ISRAEL'S POSITIVE RELATIONSHIP WITH USG.

4. MRS MEIR HAS MADE NO PUBLIC COMMENT ON WHETHER SHE WILL FILL DEFENSE MINISTRY POSITION HERSELF OR APPOINT SOMEONE ELSE, BUT WIDESPREAD UNCONFIRMED SPECULATION IS THAT SHE WILL ASK RABIN TO TAKE OVER THE POST. IT IS STILL UNCERTAIN WHETHER DAYAN WILL TAKE PART THIS WEEK IN TALKS WITH SECRETARY CONCERNING ISRAELI-SYRIA DISENGAGEMENT. HOWEVER, WE GATHER THAT HER REPORTED DECISION TO DEFER PRESENTATION OF NEW CABINET TO KNESSET

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UNTIL MARCH 4 IS FOR EXPRESS PURPOSE OF HAVING DAYAN PARTICIPATE IN TALKS, AS HE IN THIS CASE CONTINUES OFFICIALLY TO SERVE AS DEFENSE MINISTER UNTIL NEW CABINET RECEIVES KNESSET VOTE OF CONFIDENCE.

5. IN ADDITION TO WEEKEND CONTACTS BETWEEN MAPAI (MRS MEIR) AND RAFI (DAYAN) FACTIONS OF LABOR PARTY, THERE ALSO WERE CONTACTS BETWEEN LABOR ALIGNMENT AND NATIONAL RELIGIOUS PARTY, WHICH WE UNDERSTAND WERE FRUITLESS, NRP HAVING DUG ITS HEELS IN

EVEN FURTHER. KEATING UNQUOTE CASEY

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